

SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD
Circa 1954¹

“I think that the criminal flood is an inescapable result of our earlier failure to teach God convincingly to the youthful unfortunates who are our juvenile delinquents of today and who will be our adult criminals of tomorrow.”²

“Without these words, ... the pledge ignores a definitive factor in the American way of life and that factor is belief in God.”³

“[T]he fundamental issue which is the unbridgeable gap between America and Communist Russia is a belief in Almighty God.”³

“From the root of atheism stems the evil weed of communism.”³

“An atheistic American ... is a contradiction in terms.”³

“[T]he American way of life is ... ‘a way of life that sees man as a sentient being created by God and seeking to know His will, whose soul is restless till he rests in God.’”³

“From their earliest childhood our children must know the real meaning of America. Children and Americans of all ages must know that this is one Nation which ‘under God’ means ‘liberty and justice for all.’”³

“[T]he fundamental basis of our Government is the recognition that all lawful authority stems from Almighty God.”⁴

“[W]e recognize the spiritual origins and traditions of our country as our real bulwark against atheistic communism.”⁴

“[O]nly under God will our beloved country continue to be a citadel of freedom.”⁴

“The pledge of allegiance should be proclaimed in the spirit ... recogni[zing] God as the Creator of mankind, and the ultimate source both of the rights of man and of the powers of government.”⁵

¹ These quotations were originally used in Plaintiff’s prior challenge to “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance. *Elk Grove Unified Sch. Dist. v. Newdow*, 124 S. Ct. 2301 (2004). They are just as pertinent in revealing how the political climate of the 1950s was permeated with (Christian) monotheism, which Congress was intent on infusing into society.

² 99 Cong. Rec. 12 (Appendix), A4155 (May 22, 1953) (Attributed to J. Edgar Hoover in article inserted into the record by Rep. Louis C. Rabaut, sponsor of the House resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

³ 100 Cong. Rec. 2, 1700 (Feb. 12, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Louis C. Rabaut, sponsor of the House resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

⁴ 100 Cong. Rec. 17 (Appendix), A2515-A2516 (Apr. 1, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Louis C. Rabaut, sponsor of the House resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

“Certainly, in these days of great challenge to America, one can hardly think of a more inspiring symbolic deed than for America to reaffirm its faith in divine providence.”⁶

“What better training for our youngsters could there be than to have them, each time they pledge allegiance to Old Glory, reassert their belief, like that of their fathers and their fathers before them, in the all-present, all-knowing, all-seeing, all-powerful Creator.”⁶

“[I]n times like these when Godless communism is the greatest peril this Nation faces, it becomes more necessary than ever to avow our faith in God and to affirm the recognition that the core of our strength comes from Him.”⁷

“Hence it is fitting that those two profoundly meaningful words ‘under God’ should be included in the pledge of allegiance so that we and our children, who recite the pledge far more often than adults, may be reminded that spiritual strength derived from God is the source of all human liberty.”⁷

“[The] principles of the worthwhileness of the individual human being are meaningless unless there exists a Supreme Being.”⁸

“It is the Nation itself which was born and lives ‘under God.’”⁸

“[T]he one fundamental issue which is the unbridgeable gap between America and Communist Russia is belief in Almighty God.”⁸

“More importantly, the children of our land, in the daily recitation of the pledge in school, will be daily impressed with a true understanding of our way of life and its origins. ... Fortify our youth in their allegiance to the flag by their dedication to ‘one Nation, under God.’”⁸

“He is the God, undivided by creed, to whom we look, in the final analysis, for the well-being of our Nation. Therefore, when we make our pledge to the flag I believe it fitting that we recognize by words what our faith has always been.”⁹

⁵ 100 Cong. Rec. 4, 5069 (Apr. 13, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Peter W. Rodino, Jr. in support of the resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

⁶ 100 Cong. Rec. 5, 5915 (May 4, 1954) (Statement of Sen. Alexander Wiley in support of Sen. Ferguson’s resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

⁷ 100 Cong. Rec. 5, 5915 (May 4, 1954) (Milwaukee Sentinel editorial printed in the Congressional Record – with the unanimous consent of the Senate – as requested by Sen. Alexander Wiley in support of Sen. Ferguson’s resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

⁸ 100 Cong. Rec. 5, 6077-6078 (May 5, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Louis C. Rabaut, sponsor of the House resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

⁹ 100 Cong. Rec. 5, 6085 (May 5, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Francis E. Dorn, supporting passage of House Joint Resolution 502 which sought to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

It is a “fundamental truth ... that a government deriving its powers from the consent of the governed must look to God for divine leadership.”¹⁰

“We are asking that only two words be added to the Pledge of Allegiance, but they are very significant words.”¹¹

“[T]he Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag which stands for the United States of America should recognize the Creator who we really believe is in control of the destinies of this great Republic.”¹¹

“It is true that under the Constitution no power is lodged anywhere to establish a religion. This is not an attempt to establish a religion; it has nothing to do with anything of that kind. It relates to belief in God, in whom we sincerely repose our trust.”¹¹

“Appropriations and expenditures for defense will be of value only if the God under whom we live believes that we are in the right. We should at all times recognize God’s province over the lives of our people and over this great Nation.”¹¹

“[The Pledge] is not only a pledge of words but also of belief.”¹¹

“[B]elief in God is part of our very lives.”¹¹

“The United States is one of the outstanding nations of the world standing foursquare on the principle that God governs the affairs of men.”¹²

“Billy Graham [said,] ‘We have dropped our pilot, the Lord Jesus Christ, and are sailing blindly on without divine chart or compass.’”¹²

“[I]t is well that when the pledge of allegiance to the flag is made by every loyal citizen and by the schoolchildren of America, there should be embodied in the pledge our allegiance and faith in Almighty God. The addition of the words ‘under God’ will accomplish this purpose.”¹²

“[W]hen Francis Bellamy wrote this stirring pledge, the pall of atheism had not yet spread its hateful shadow over the world, and almost everyone acknowledged the dominion of Almighty God.”¹³

¹⁰ S. Rep. No. 1287, 83rd Cong., 2d Sess. 2, reprinted in 100 Cong. Rec. 5, 6231 (May 10, 1954) (Letter of Sen. Homer Ferguson, sponsor of the Senate resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance, to Sen. William Langer, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, March 10, 1954)

¹¹ 100 Cong. Rec. 5, 6348 (May 11, 1954) (Sen. Homer Ferguson’s explanation of the joint resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance, to Sen. William Langer, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, March 10, 1954)

¹² 100 Cong. Rec. 5, 6919 (May 20, 1954) (Rep. Homer D. Angell’s remarks on the joint resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge of Allegiance)

¹³ 100 Cong. Rec. 18 (Appendix), A3448 (May 11, 1954) (Letter entered into the record by Rep. George H. Fallon. This was “[p]assed without a single dissenting vote, and later adopted by the DAR,

“[N]ow that the militant atheistic Red menace is abroad in our land, it behooves us to remind the free people of these United States that they are utterly at the mercy of God.”¹³

“Now that pagan philosophies have been introduced by the Soviet Union, there is a necessity for reaffirming belief in God.”¹⁴

“I appear here today in support of any and all bills that would serve to recognize the power and universality of God in our pledge of allegiance.”¹⁵

“The inclusion of God in our pledge would acknowledge the dependence of our people, and our Government upon the moral direction and the restraints of religion.”¹⁵

“The significant import of our action today ... is that we are officially recognizing once again this Nation’s adherence to our belief in a divine spirit, and that henceforth millions of our citizens will be acknowledging this belief every time they pledge allegiance to our flag.”¹⁶

“How fitting that we here today should take action to once more affirm our belief in ... the guidance of a divine spirit.”¹⁶

“Once again we are proclaiming to the world that ... the flag which flies over our land is a symbol of a nation and of a people under God.”¹⁶

“[T]his measure is more than one of passing importance. It goes to the very fundamentals of life and creation. It recognizes that all things which we have in the way of life, liberty, constitutional government, and rights of man are held by us under the divine benediction of the Almighty. There is a hope and a hereafter in these two words and they, of course, should be included in the pledge of allegiance to Old Glory.”¹⁷

“One thing separates free peoples of the Western World from the rabid Communist, and this one thing is a belief in God. In adding this one phrase to our pledge of allegiance to our flag, we in effect declare openly that we denounce the pagan doctrine of communism and declare ‘under God’ in favor of free government and a free world.”¹⁷

“Fortify our youth in their allegiance to the flag by their dedication to ‘one nation under God.’”¹⁸

the Flag House Association, the VFW, the DAV, sections of the American Legion ..., incorporated in the pledge at the ‘I Am An American Day’ ... etc., etc.”)

¹⁴ 100 Cong. Rec. 18 (Appendix), A4066 (May 24, 1954) (Newspaper article from the Malden (Mass.) Press of May 13, 1954, entered into the record by Rep. Angier L. Goodwin.)

¹⁵ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7590-7591 (June 2, 1954) (Rep. John R. Pillion’s statement provided on May 5, 1954 to Subcommittee No. 5 of the House Committee on the Judiciary.)

¹⁶ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7757 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Oliver P. Bolton in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

¹⁷ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7758 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Brooks in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

¹⁸ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7759 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Louis C. Rabaut in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

“Regaining our reverence for God we in America in this 20th century can rediscover our own value and the solid basis on which it rests.”¹⁹

“The first sentence of section 7 of the joint resolution (36 U.S.C. sec. 172), as amended, ‘one Nation indivisible under God,’ is a realistic recognition of the theological and philosophical truth – the existence of a Supreme Being.”²⁰

“When the forces of anti-God and antireligion so persistently spread their dangerous and insidious propaganda, it is wholesome for us to have constantly brought to our minds the fact that, mighty and essential as armed strength may be, it is the strength of the spirit and the moral force generated by the righteousness of our cause and the purity of our motives to which we must ultimately look for salvation from destruction and for triumph over the evil forces that best us.”²¹

“Faith in God ... has never been misplaced. House Joint Resolution 243 is a proclamation to all the world and to ourselves, ever to keep us mindful and prayerful, that the United States of America is in truth and in the acknowledged fact, a ‘Nation under God.’”²²

“This [is a] victory for God and country.”²²

“[The joint resolution] seems to have struck a note of universal approval, indicating an underlying acknowledgement of our indebtedness to God and our dependence upon Him.”²³

“At this moment of our history the principles underlying our American Government and the American way of life are under attack by a system that does not believe in God. A system that denies the existence of God.”²³

“Thus, the inclusion of God in our pledge of allegiance rightly and most appropriately acknowledges the dependence of our people and our Government upon that divinity that rules over the destinies of nations as well as individuals.”²³

“The God of nations who helped in bringing to a successful conclusion the war of independence, has never ceased to control the destiny of this great Nations, and I trust He never will.”²³

¹⁹ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7759 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Charles G. Oakman in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

²⁰ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7760 (June 7, 1954) (Letter written by the Chairman of the Department of Political Science at the University of Detroit, placed into the record by Rep. Brooks in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

²¹ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7760 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Keating in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

²² 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7761-7762 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Barratt O’Hara in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

²³ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7762-7763 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Wolverton in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

“[O]ne of the greatest differences between the free world and the Communists [is] a belief in God. The spiritual bankruptcy of the Communists is one of our strongest weapons in the struggle for men’s minds and this resolution gives us a new means of using that weapon.”²³

“The use of the phrase ‘under God’ in the pledge of allegiance to the flag sets forth in a mere two words, but, very strong and meaningful words, the fundamental faith and belief of America in the overruling providence of God and our dependence at all times upon Him.”²³

“The recitation of this acknowledgement that God is the foundation of our Nation will be of incalculable value, all through the years, of ever keeping vividly before our people, including our children who from earliest childhood, pledge their allegiance to the flag, that the real source of our strength in the future, as in the past, is God.”²³

“[T]he Government and people of America have recognized the necessity of doing the will of God as we see it, and of relying for our strength and welfare on the protection of His divine providence.”²⁴

“To insert these two words in the pledge ... would be the most forceful possible defiance of the militant atheism and ‘dialectical materialism’ that are identified with Russian and international communism.”²⁴

“[W]e wish now, with no ambiguity or reservation, to place ourselves under the rule and care of God.”²⁴

“We Members of Congress ... felt and acted on the popular urge to give expression to the conviction that our deliberations should be publicly and tangibly submitted to the guidance of God.”²⁴

“[W]e do well to once more publicly and officially affirm our faith.”²⁵

“[O]ur citizenship is of no real value to us unless our hearts speak in accord with our lips; and unless we can open our souls before God and before Him conscientiously say, ‘I am an American.’”²⁶

“God is the symbol of liberty to America.”²⁶

“The amendment to the pledge of allegiance to the flag, by inserting the words ‘under God,’ is a simple device by which we can verbally proclaim our intense desire to continue this land as ‘one Nation, under God, indivisible.’”²⁶

²⁴ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7763-7764 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Peter W. Rodino, Jr. in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge. Amazingly, included in this statement were the words “I am firmly of the opinion that our Founding Fathers ... meant to prevent ... any provision of law that could raise one form of religion to a position of preference over others.”)

²⁵ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7764 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Oliver P. Bolton in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

²⁶ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7765-7766 (June 7, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Hugh J. Addonizio in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

“[L]iberty, justice, and human equality ... are man’s own heritage from God.”²⁶

“Never before in our national history have so many diverse groups enjoyed such a complete measure of religious freedom as exists in the United States today. But it is even more inspiring to realize that these religious groups are all working ‘under God’ in their own ways, to help solve the problems which characterize our troubled era.”²⁶

“A child’s belief in spiritual values is beautiful to behold.”²⁶

“I believe it to be of great importance that we as a Nation recognize a higher power than ourselves in the guidance of our existence. This joint resolution recognizes that we believe there is a Divine Power, and that we, our children, and our children’s children should always recognize it.”²⁷

“I believe we should trust in God and we should recognize that God is guiding our destiny and the hopes and aspirations of this Nation.”²⁷

“It is so fitting that we declare to the world, in our position as leader among the sister nations of the earth, our dependence upon Almighty God.”²⁸

“In my experience as a public servant and as a Member of Congress I have never seen a bill which was so noncontroversial in nature or so inspiring in purpose.”²⁹

“I am proud to have been associated with this effort that produced this legislation which recognizes the importance of divine guidance in our national affairs.”²⁹

“We see the pledge, as it now stands, as a formal declaration of our duty to serve God and our firm reliance, now as in 1776, on the protection of divine providence.”³⁰

“To put the words ‘under God’ on millions of lips is like running up the believer’s flag as the witness of a great nation’s faith.”³¹

²⁷ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7833-7834 (June 8, 1954) (Statement of Sen. Homer Ferguson in support of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

²⁸ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7935 (June 9, 1954) (Letter from Rep. Louis C. Rabaut to President Eisenhower, informing him of the passage in Congress of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

²⁹ 100 Cong. Rec. 6, 7989 (June 10, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Charles G. Oakman recounting the passage of the joint resolution to amend the previously secular Pledge.)

³⁰ 100 Cong. Rec. 7, 8563 (June 22, 1954) (Statement of Sen. Burke, submitting a resolution to provide for printing of the now sectarian Pledge as a Senate document. Sen. Burke also noted that the resolution adding “under God” to the previously secular Pledge “had been passed by House and Senate with no opposition.”)

³¹ 100 Cong. Rec. 7, 8617-8618 (June 22, 1954) (Statement of Sen. Homer Ferguson, reviewing the meaning of the new law that added “under God” to the previously secular Pledge, and recapping the events of that first Flag Day celebration with the new Pledge.)

“[A]s the flag was raised a bugle rang out with the familiar strains of ‘Onward, Christian Soldiers!’”³¹

“From this day forward, the millions of our school children will daily proclaim in every city and town, every village and rural schoolhouse, the dedication of our Nation and our people to the Almighty.”³²

“It is my belief that an extensive circulation of these printed copies of the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag will imprint, indelibly, upon the minds of those who read them, whether they be young or old, that their great Nation, these United States, exists and endures purposefully ‘Under God.’”³³

“Freedom in a world faced with this interminable conflict between communism and Christianity will survive only so long as freemen are willing to fight for that precious principle.”³⁴

“You have learned that you live in a free nation composed of free men and women who are willing to sacrifice all they possess, as did their forefathers, to preserve the Christian principles of a free nation under God.”³⁴

“Today we express ... our national dependence upon almighty God by pledging, as a nation, our allegiance to the Stars and Stripes.”³⁵

“Wherever this banner is unfurled there is hope in the hearts of men who believe that God created man and destined him to be free.”³⁵

“[T]he need now is for the Christian ideas to neutralize the preponderance of material know-how. ... We cannot afford to capitulate to the atheistic philosophies of godless men – we must strive to ever remind the world that this great Nation has been endowed by a creator.”³⁵

“The sordid records of the divorce courts, of the juvenile delinquency case histories, the tragedy of broken homes, wandering families, of the cheap price put on human life, the old heads on young children, the disrespect for authority, the contempt for law, the chiseling among those in authority, the lack of honor among the citizenry – all of this is the shame of America, the open sores of her secularist spirit.”³⁶

³² 100 Cong. Rec. 7, 8618 (June 22, 1954) (Statement by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, as reported by Sen. Ferguson.)

³³ 100 Cong. Rec. 7, 8893 (June 24, 1954) (Statement of Rep. Louis C. Rabaut submitting a resolution to provide for printing of the now sectarian Pledge as a House document.)

³⁴ 101 Cong. Rec. 6, 8073 (June 13, 1955) (From text of address given by Rep. Martin at the joint commissioning ceremonies for Army, Navy and Air Force ROTC graduates at Dartmouth College, June 11, 1955.)

³⁵ 101 Cong. Rec. 6, 8156 (June 14, 1955) (Rep. Louis C. Rabaut’s statement during the 1955 Flag Day ceremonies.)

³⁶ 101 Cong. Rec. 18 (Appendix), A5920-A5921 (Aug. 2, 1955) (Article submitted by Rep. Louis C. Rabaut, sponsor of the House resolution to insert the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge.)

“If we have no rights under God, then America has no purpose of existence. For America is all that she is simply because she recognizes our rights under God.”³⁶

“The further men move from God and His principles, the worse it will be for America.”³⁶

“Our people without God would be a people reading the death warrant to real American freedom.”³⁶

“[The] right to profess God-given principles, to practice God-given commandments, and to live God-ordered lives ... is America and will always be America. There is no other pattern of life that can bear this trademark.”³⁶

“It is time that we really be neighbors in the Christian sense, that we live as neighbors, and have trust one for the other. This is the American way; this is God’s way.”³⁶

“Only God-fearing men can guarantee to America her greatness, her survival, and her continued blessings.”³⁶

“As these words are repeated, ‘one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,’ we are reminded not only of our dependence upon God but likewise the assurance of security that can be ours through reliance upon God.”³⁷

“These words, ‘under God,’ ... can be taken as evidence of our faith in that divine source of strength that has meant and always will mean so much to us as a nation.”³⁷

“Let us never forget that recognition of God by this and the other nations of the free world will mean victory and security against the forces of evil that deny God. May we, as a nation under God, ever recognize Him as the source of our refuge and strength.”³⁷

“These principles of the worthwhileness of the individual human being are meaningless unless there exists a Supreme Being.”³⁸

“‘Under God’ in the pledge of allegiance to the flag expresses, aptly and forcefully, a grateful nation’s attitude of dependence upon Almighty God.”³⁸

“For under God this Nation lives.”³⁸

“Our political institutions reflect the traditional American conviction of the worthwhileness of the individual human being. That conviction, in turn, is based on our belief that the human person is important because he has been created in the image and likeness of God and that he has been endowed by God with certain inalienable rights.”³⁸

³⁷ 100 Cong. Rec. 11, 14918-14919 (Aug. 17, 1954) (Remarks of Rep. Wolverton entitled “One Nation – Under God.”)

³⁸ 100 Cong. Rec. 12, 15828-15829 (Aug. 20, 1954) (Remarks of Rep. Louis C. Rabaut, sponsor of the House resolution placing the words “under God” into the previously secular Pledge.)